

Intervention: Peer support

Finding: Sufficient evidence for effectiveness

Potential partners to undertake the intervention:

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofits or local coalitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Businesses or labor organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools or universities | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health care providers | <input type="checkbox"/> Local public health departments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State public health departments | <input type="checkbox"/> Policymakers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals, clinics or managed care organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Background:

Peer support interventions aim to encourage and support pregnant women and mothers who breastfeed. These interventions include individual counseling and mother-to-mother support groups, each provided by mothers who are currently breastfeeding or who have done so in the past.

Findings from the systematic reviews:

The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions categorizes these interventions under “Evidence based interventions.” It reports that peer support programs are effective in increasing the initiation and duration of breastfeeding among a variety of population groups (including low-income populations).

Multi-faceted interventions with peer support as one of the main components have also been found to be effective.

Limitations/Comments:

The recommendations in this priority area are largely informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions. Although the CDC report draws heavily on the reviews of the Cochrane Collaboration, a well-respected source of research in public health, its methodology for categorizing interventions is not outlined explicitly.

References:

Shealy KR, Li R, Benton-Davis S, Grummer-Strawn LM. The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005. Available online at: http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding_interventions.pdf